

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY KIGALI
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AMCONSUL BUKAVU BY POUCH

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E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: GORILLA POACHING

1. FOLLOWING ARTICLE APPEARED IN SUNDAY, JULY 30 EDITION
OF WASHINGTON POST. QUOTE:
TWO MEMBERS OF AN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF MOUNTAIN GORILLA
WERE SHOT AND KILLED IN A PRIVATE PRESERVE IN THE AFRICAN
NATION OF RWANDA, RAISING THE POSSIBILITY THAT POACHERS
MIGHT BE KILLING THE ANIMALS FOR THEIR HEADS.
AT LEAST ONE OF THE GORILLAS WAS DECAPITATED AND
THE OTHER MAY HAVE SUFFERED THE SAME FATE, ACCORDING TO
INFORMATION RECEIVED YESTERDAY BY THE WORLD WILDLIFE FUND.
A CABLE RECEIVED BY A BOARD MEMBER WAS UNCLEAR AS TO
WHETHER THE SECOND GORILLA HAD BEEN KILLED FOR ITS HEAD,
WHICH POACHERS SELL AS TROPHIES.
THE CABLE CAME TO JEFFREY SHORT IN CHICAGO FROM DIANE
FOSSEY, A NATURALIST WHO HAS BEEN LIVING AMONG THE MOUNTAIN
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GORILLAS IN RWANDA FOR SIX YEARS. FOSSEY'S CABLE SAID THE
TWO GORILLAS HAD BEEN SHOT ALONG RWANDA'S BORDER WITH ZAIRE,

A MOUNTAINOUS REGION RWANDA SET UP AS A PARK FOR THE
ANIMALS.
NATURALISTS SAY THERE ARE AS FEW AS 200 MOUNTAIN
GORILLAS IN THE WORLD, MOST OF THEM IN RWANDA. THE MOUN-

TAIN GORILLA (CALLED GORILLA GORILLA) IS THE LARGEST OF THE WORLD'S TWO SPECIES OF GORILLA (THE OTHER IS THE LOW-LAND GORILLA) BUT IS DECLINING IN NUMBERS AT AN ALARMING RATE.

THE MOUNTAIN GORILLA GROWS TO SIX FEET AND CAN WEIGH AS MUCH AS 400 POUNDS. THE MALE HAS A PRONOUNCED CREST ON TOP OF ITS HEAD THAT SETS IT APART FROM THE MALE LOW-LAND GORILLAS.

ITS NUMBERS HAVE DECREASED BECAUSE THE MOUNTAIN GORILLA'S HABITAT HAS BEEN ENCROACHED BY NATIVES SEEKING NEW FARMLAND AND GRASSLAND AND BY PLANTATION OWNERS GROWING BANANAS.

FOSSEY SAID IN HER CABLE THAT SHE HAD NO EVIDENCE THAT POACHERS HAD KILLED THE GORILLAS, THOUGH THE DECAPITATION SUGGESTED THEY COMMITTED THE CRIME. PLANTATION OWNERS COULD HAVE DONE IT, SINCE THEY HAVE COMPLAINED ON OCCASION THAT THE GORILLAS RAID THEIR BANANA TREES.

ONLY 12 MOUNTAIN GORILLAS RESIDE IN ZOOS. FIVE ARE IN ANTWERP, TWO IN CHESTER, ENGLAND, TWO IN COLOGNE AND THREE IN OKLAHOMA CITY.

"I HAVE NO IDEA WHY ANYBODY WOULD KILL ONE OF THESE CREATURES," SAID THEODORE REED, DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL ZOO. S. DILLON RIPLEY, SECRETARY OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION AND CHAIRMAN OF THE WORLD WILDLIFE FUND, SAID, "I DEPLORE THE SENSELESS DESTRUCTION OF ONE OF THE WORLD'S GENTLEST RELATIVES OF MAN." END QUOTE.

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2. SMITHSONIAN OFFICIAL PHONED DESK OFFICER TO REPORT THAT MR. RIPLEY IS SENDING A CABLE DIRECTLY TO PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA CONCERNING THIS REPORT. VANCE

NOTE BY OC/T: POUCHED TO AMCONSUL BUKAVU.

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